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8 Mar 68 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN Map

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*Vietnam:

South Vietnam: The high level of Communist rocket and mortar attacks of the past several days has tapered off sharply.

Heavy ground fighting has, however, been reported near the Demilitarized Zone, in the western highlands, and in northwestern III Corps.

In Darlac Province, the South Vietnamese Army 45th Regiment sustained heavy losses in two days of fighting with a reinforced North Vietnamese battalion northeast of Ban Me Thuot. During the initial phase of the action, the enemy killed the commanding officer of one of the South Vietnamese battalions and forced his troops to withdraw in complete disorder. Two additional South Vietnamese battalions brought into the battle on the second day also met stiff resistance.

The fighting is still going on. Failure to dislodge the Communists in this instance would have a serious effect on the government units involved and impair their aggressiveness in future operations.

A motion of no confidence in the government of Premier Loc has been placed before the Lower House, but it is not expected to be acted upon for some weeks. Action on the government budget has priority on the agenda, and any formal recommendation of no confidence must have the approval of both houses of the assembly.

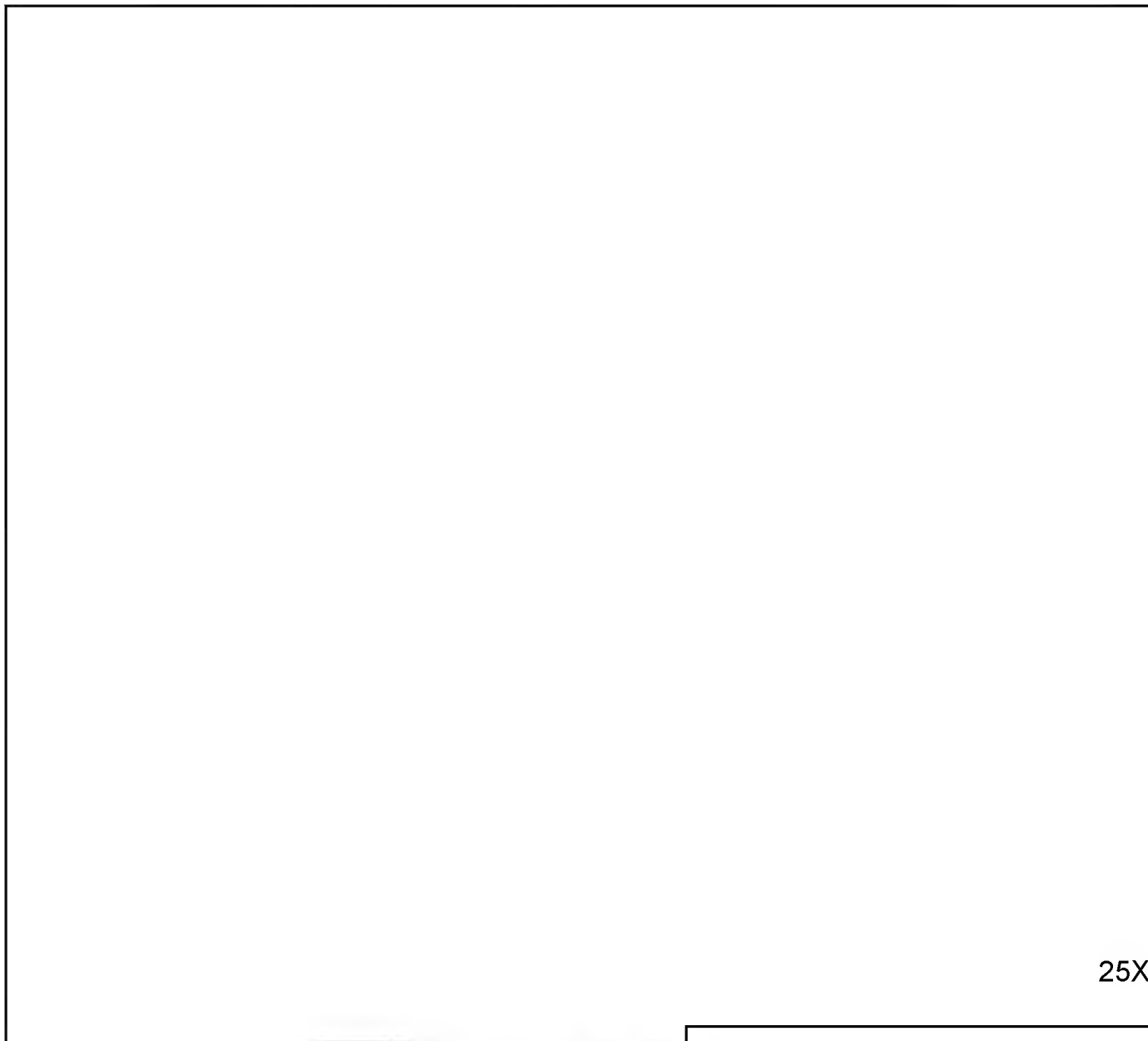
The motion was apparently based on a petition sponsored by the New Society Bloc, an opposition faction strongly representing southern viewpoints. It reportedly seeks the removal of certain individuals cited as incompetent for failing to detect Communist plans for the Tet offensive. Named in addition to Loc, were Minister of Defense Nguyen Van Vy, Minister of Interior Linh Quang Vien, and Police Director General Nguyen Ngoc Loan.

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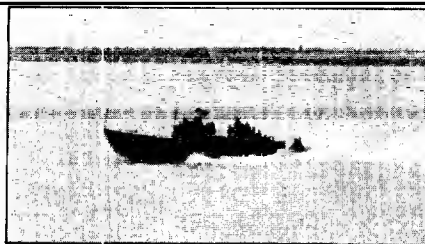
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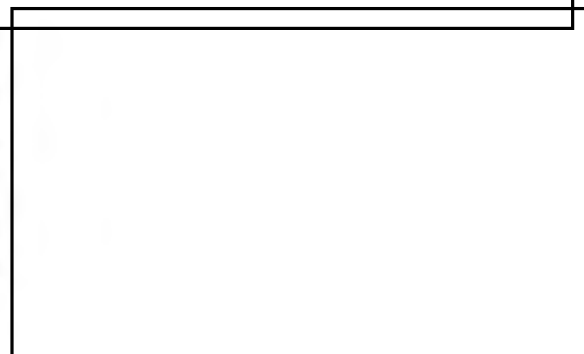
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Chinese Hydrofoil PT Boat




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8 Mar 68 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN Map/Photos

North Vietnam: The Chinese have delivered at least one modern hydrofoil torpedo boat to North Vietnam.



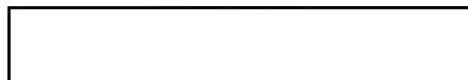
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The Hu Chwan, built and designed by the Chinese, may be useful to Hanoi for protecting coastal waters. The boats should be good for hit-and-run tactics and could be used against US naval forces in the Tonkin Gulf.  (Maps/Photos)

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Czechoslovakia: Pressure is building in Prague for the resignation of President Novotny.

The defection to the United States of Major General Jan Sejna is being exploited to discredit Novotny and other opponents of new First Secretary Dubcek, including Defense Minister Lomsky, Minister of Interior Kudrna, and Prosecutor General Bartuska.

The party presidium has launched an investigation into the circumstances of the defection, and the National Assembly, which has lifted Sejna's immunity from prosecution as a deputy, is demanding a separate inquiry. Both Lomsky and Kudrna have been ordered to submit a detailed report on the defection at a cabinet session set for 13 March. Apart from looking into the circumstances which "enabled" Sejna to defect, the investigation will also cover his role in the aborted mobilization of a tank division in support of Novotny during the January leadership crisis. Other officials are said to be implicated with Sejna.

The Sejna affair has come at an opportune time for the Dubcek faction, elements of which have intensified the struggle against the conservatives in the past few days. On 5 March Novotny was explicitly attacked in a news conference by Josef Boruvka, an agricultural specialist who was brought into the party presidium in January. On 7 March, Radio Prague, in its foreign broadcasts, for the first time attacked Novotny by name, linking his son to Sejna.

The tempo of attacks on Novotny should increase markedly, and it is possible that he will soon resign.

Defense Minister Lomsky, along with party chief Dubcek, had been attending the Warsaw Pact meeting in Sofia, which ended yesterday. His presence undoubtedly was an embarrassment to the rest of the Czechoslovak delegation. The matter of his ouster will be complicated,

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however, because he has long enjoyed Soviet support in return for his loyal direction of the Czechoslovak armed forces. [REDACTED]

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Cambodia. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] details on the location and function of Communist bases situated on Cambodian territory opposite South Vietnam's Chau Doc Province.

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[REDACTED] the Communists reached an understanding with a sympathetic Cambodian military officer as early as 1960. This permitted them to control and tax trade across the border and to locate at least three small camps on Cambodian soil.

The camps, moved frequently to avoid detection, were used for district and provincial level meetings as well as for training purposes. On a number of occasions they were used to stage attacks into South Vietnam. The Communists had to keep their presence in Cambodia as unobtrusive as possible in order not to compromise the local Cambodian officers who were acting without authorization from Phnom Penh.

[REDACTED] in recent months pressure from Phnom Penh for tighter border controls, along with disquiet among the Cambodian population over the Communist presence, has impinged on Communist activities.

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[REDACTED] the Communists opened an important supply route through southern Cambodia as early as 1966.

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[REDACTED] assertions, particularly that substantial quantities of military hardware have passed over this route, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] did not say whether such supplies were drawn from Cambodian stocks or brought

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in clandestinely through Sihanoukville or elsewhere
along the Cambodian coast.



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*Panama: President Robles' public denunciation of the opposition's motives in attempting to impeach him may have destroyed any chance of compromise.

In a nationwide speech yesterday, Robles labeled the impeachment proceedings as "illegal and immoral." Spurning a summons from the National Assembly commission investigating the accusations against him, Robles said his constitutional duty was to prevent a "temporary" political majority from dictating to the executive and that therefore he views the assembly's action "completely null."

Earlier yesterday, Robles obtained a municipal court order enjoining the assembly from impeaching him. The legislators are expected to meet this morning and reject the injunction. It is not clear whether they will also hear the commission's report on the impeachment charges.

[redacted] claim that Robles' latest moves can only worsen the crisis. Opposition leader and presidential aspirant Arnulfo Arias [redacted] considers the door to a negotiated settlement closed.

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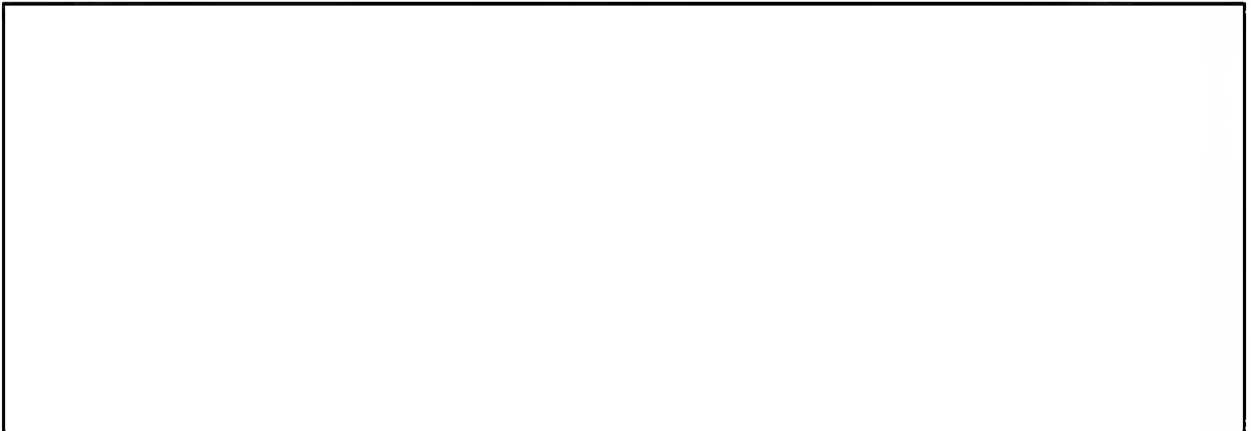
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NOTES

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*Warsaw Pact: The two-day meeting of the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee ended in Sofia yesterday without any sign of a new Soviet-Rumanian confrontation. There are varying reports on what was discussed; a final communique is to be released today. Moscow did broadcast an unusually flat statement yesterday noting only that "the meeting adopted appropriate decisions on the questions under discussion," omitting any of the usual fulsome assertions of a complete unity of views. 

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